



FIVE **TV TRICKS** THAT WILL HELP YOU **SHINE**

IN A BUSINESS PRESENTATION OR SPEECH



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You may never appear on TV and you don't have to in order to benefit from what I have learned in more than three decades of working in television. After all, a TV program is nothing more than a highly produced presentation regardless of whether it's an information presentation—a newscast, a sales presentation—a shopping show, or an entertainment presentation—a drama program.

In business you have to make information presentations and speeches all the time. They're called meetings. You have to make sales presentations. You have to persuade people to see things your way. If you can add a little drama and entertainment—without being cheesy—good for you. Just make sure the drama and entertainment help you achieve the objective of your meeting, presentation, or speech.

Here are five TV tricks that I've learned over the years that you can put to good and immediate use in your next meeting, presentation, or speech. And when you use a trick, let me know your results. Send me an e-mail to info@gerrysandusky.com. I love hearing success stories and learning creative ways other pros put these tips to good use.

Here's to you shining in front of the room,



TRICK 1



TRICK 1

Your audience wants you to succeed

When you turn on a TV newscast, a favorite program, or a sporting event, the broadcasters never greet you with the line, “Good evening, I’m having a terrible day.” They don’t welcome you by saying, “I’m looking a little disheveled because I’m super nervous.” And they never begin by saying, “I hope you’ll take pity on me because I’m not very good at this.” But I see people do that in business presentations all the time. They don’t always do it with their words. Sometimes they do it with their body language, other times with their tone of voice, other times with their appearance.

One of the tricks I learned early in my TV career was to trust that my audience wants me to succeed. There’s no benefit to the audience if I’m terrible or if I share all of my problems with them to win their sympathy. Do that in TV and the audience will reach for the remote and find another option. The same holds for business presentations. Let’s face it, most people don’t want to attend another meeting, another presentation, or another conference. So if they have to attend they at least want it to be good. They want you to be good. They’ll show up hoping you have something interesting to say or an interesting way of saying it. Buy into that support. Trust it. Don’t give it away by whining, moping, or asking forgiveness for any and all of your shortcomings.



TRICK 1 *cont.*



This is the largest audience I have ever spoken to in person—90,000 people. 180,000 eyes. Pretty intimidating. But as I stood on the platform and began to speak I held on to the thought that they want me to succeed because they want to have fun. They're pulling for me. Once I bought into that idea and energy, I had fun and so did the audience. You will too. Your audience has a vested interest in your success. Lean on their support.

You don't have to blow your audience away in the first minute of the meeting to establish yourself as a great leader, presenter, or business person. Just don't blow it with your audience in the first minute by seeking forgiveness.

Your audience wants you to succeed.

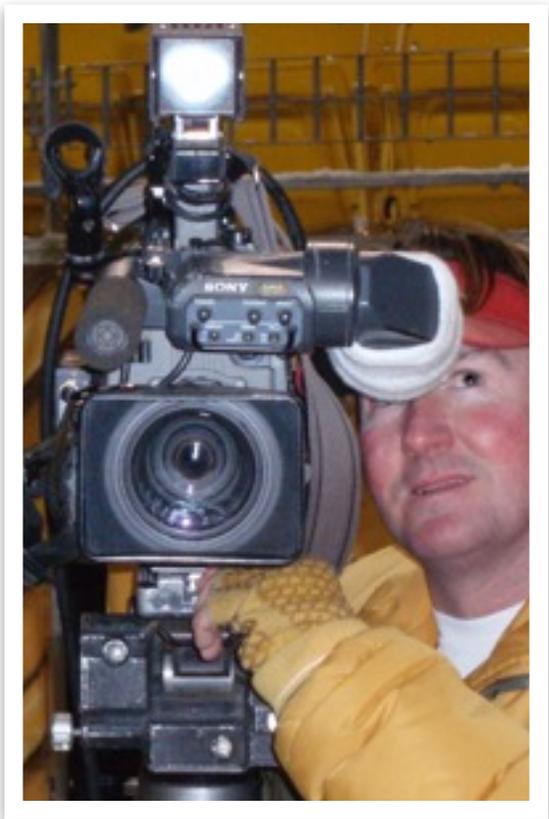
Give your audience what it wants.



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TRICK 2



TRICK 2 Look through the lens

When I first began in TV, like most young broadcasters, I had to learn how to hold eye contact with the camera. It's intimidating at first. The camera has this unusual power. You've heard the phrase "the camera doesn't blink." You feel it when you stand in front of a TV camera, a relentless power pushing against you, a wave of energy that neither yields nor diminishes. You have to learn to lean into that energy with an equal energy of your own.

The same holds true with a speech or a business presentation. You have all of these people, all of these eyes staring at you. You can feel outnumbered standing there in front of the room in front of what suddenly feels like a sea of eyes, unblinking, unyielding, looking at you.

Too often business presenters just try to wash their gaze across the room, glazing over each person. That doesn't work.

In TV, if you don't diffuse the tension caused by that energy you will wind up looking like a deer in the headlights of an oncoming truck, staring wide eyed at the camera. You've seen people on TV with that blank, panicked look. It makes you feel uncomfortable as a viewer. Everyone loses.

You see looking at the camera lens isn't enough. When you just look at the front of the lens, you actually miss the audience. You have to look through the lens, all the way to the back of it. That's where you make really eye contact with a TV viewer. That's where you make a connection and something as impersonal as a TV camera and a TV screen suddenly disappear and the broadcaster and viewer connect with the viewer feeling like the broadcaster is making direct eye contact with her.



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TRICK 2 *cont.*



The same trick applies when you stand in front of the room in a business meeting, at a podium, or in front of a PowerPoint screen. Don't focus on all of the eyes at once. That will leave you feeling like a series of ten foot waves coming at you. It will diminish you. Instead, when you address an audience do it one person at a time—regardless of the size of the audience. Hold eye contact with one person at a time for about five to ten seconds at a time. Then move your eye contact to another person and hold it there, again for about five to ten seconds. And look deeply into each person's eyes. Look past the front of their eyes and into their pupils. Believe me they will feel and appreciate your attention and presence.

When you do that each person in the audience—not just the individual one you're making eye contact with—will feel like you're making eye contact with him. Each person will feel the connection.

You don't just want contact.

You want connection.



TRICK 3



TRICK 3

Go for personable, not perfection



Frequently in TV we have to tape a segment for a future show or upcoming live special, but we want it to look live. It's called a "look live." This is me taping a "look live" in front of the White House. You try to create the look and feel of a live segment without actually being live. Most TV personalities go about doing these the wrong way. They try to do the "look live" perfectly.

Part of what gives live TV its edge is the lack of a safety net. There are no do-overs. It's live. If you stumble over a word or accidentally look for a second to the wrong camera, the audience hears it and sees it. Here's the catch: the audience is used to that. We've been watching live TV for years and live TV is never perfect. There's always a glitch with the video, a mispronounced word, a less than perfect body movement.

Because you can do a taped segment over and over until you get it close to perfect, taped segments always have a different feel than live

TV segments. So here's the trick: When you tape a TV segment, leave in a few imperfections. As long as you don't make any factual errors, leave in the part where you stumbled over a word or glanced for a second to wrong camera. The lack of perfection is what makes it feel "live" and makes it feel real to the viewers.

The same trick applies to business presentations. Too often the presenter puts too much effort, practice, and focus into trying to get everything perfect. Your audience doesn't want perfect. Perfect actually freaks people out a little since none of us are perfect and we can't relate to that. As long as you don't litter your



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TRICK 3 *cont.*



presentation with a thousand uh's and um's or factual mistakes, it's more than acceptable to stumble over the occasional word or start to mispronounce a word and catch yourself—as long as you don't freak out when you do it and start to flog yourself for being less than perfect. Just handle any missteps the way we handle them on live TV, smoothly. Then move on. If it's a major gaff like realizing your pants zipper is down (yes, I had that happen once on live TV), then acknowledge it. Have fun with it (because your audience certainly is), and move on.

Little imperfections and the rare elephant-in-the-room imperfections actually help your audience relate to you as long as you keep your cool and remain personable. After all, that's what audiences—TV audiences, and business audiences—really want. They want a personable presenter, one they can relate with, one person to another—not a perfect presenter.

Go for personable.

Leave perfection to the tone deaf who won't understand that one feels natural and the other feels forced.



TRICK 4



TRICK 4

Set the tone before you say a word

Pay attention the opening of your favorite TV shows or news programs. You'll notice that the show doesn't just begin. It has a carefully produced open. In TV, the open gets a lot of attention because it serves a very important function: It sets the tone for what's to come. A drama uses dramatic music, black and white video. A comedy shows still shots of people smiling or doing funny things. A news program has fast, sweeping shots of a city, quick edits, fast-paced music.

If you switched up any of those opens you would leave the audience sorely disappointed with what follows. If you followed the opening to a comedy show with a series of stories that often lead a local newscasts—fires, arrests, and murders—the audience would think, “What the . . . ?”

Fred Gaudelli, the producer of NBC's Sunday Night Football says he learned as a young producer that the open to a broadcast should make people feel the way they do when they arrive to see a Broadway play, peel off their coats, settle into their seats, and take the first sip of their drink. They should feel filled with anticipation of what comes next.

The same applies to your meetings, presentations, and speeches. Give people a sense of what's to come before you say a word. Lighting, atmosphere, what you wear, music—if appropriate all help give your staff, your client, your prospect, your audience clues as to what they should feel before you say a word.



TRICK 4 *cont.*



This is me appearing on the NFL Network's morning program NFL AM, doing an interview about my book [Forgotten Sundays](#). Notice the use of color, lighting, set design. Along with the show's music it created a fun, welcoming, up beat feel to the interview before the show host or I ever said a word.

You don't need elaborate set design to make a positive impression in a business setting. Make sure you look the part, the room looks the part, the stage looks the part. Make sure it all adds to your success and doesn't detract or distract from it.

This principle also carries over to someone who is introducing you at a meeting, presentation, speech or conference. Take the time to look over their introduction. Keep your introduction short. Book length introductions kill the energy in the room. Here's the introduction I use for my keynotes:

Our keynote speaker today is the New York Times best selling author of [Forgotten Sundays](#), the play-by-play voice for the NFL's Baltimore Ravens, the sports director for Baltimore's WBAL TV, and a noted authority on communication, motivation, perception, and change.

He has won Emmy and Edward R. Murrow awards for outstanding broadcasts.

The son of former NFL coach, he has found his own niche in coaching as president of The Sandusky Group, a communications, media, and presentation skills coaching and consulting firm. His coaching and consulting work has one focus: Help professionals shine.

Please welcome, Gerry Sandusky

Ninety-nine words.



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TRICK 4 *cont.*



Let me break down the structure for you:

- I use some—key word here, some—notable accomplishments that people will relate to. That puts me into context. Everyone knows about the New York Times best-seller lists. Okay, that’s a cool thing. It raises an eyebrow or two. Same for being a broadcaster of NFL football games.
- I add one or two notable awards that people will recognize. That gives me credibility. Everyone has heard of the Emmys. Notice I don’t use a resume list of awards. Like most people I have plenty of awards you’ve never heard of and won’t mean a thing to you. Those don’t get mentioned.
- I give a thumbnail that bridges my work in broadcasting and publishing to business. This isn’t about patting myself on my back. It’s about relating to the audience. Most of my audiences are filled with business people. Executives and professionals are my target audience. Most of them can’t relate directly to a published writer and broadcaster. That’s why I add the paragraph about my company, The Sandusky Group and what we do. Now my audience gets the message. I’m one of them too, a business person.

So here’s the formula:

1. Raise an eyebrow. Pique interest.
2. Add credibility.
3. Relate to your audience

That’s your open.

And like every good TV open, it shouldn’t take very long, only as long as needed to do its job: set the appropriate tone for what follows.



TRICK 5



TRICK 5

Use a call to action from beginning to end

In a TV news broadcast or a game broadcast, the anchor or the play-by-play announcer will frequently tell you where to look and what to feel:

“Brace yourself for a shocking video.”

“Look to the lower left of your screen.”

“Watch what happens next.”

“Pay close attention to highlighted area on your screen.”

As an audience member, you begin to build a trust with the broadcaster, believing he or she will take you where you need to go just like the pilot of a plane. Good broadcasters value that trust and never abuse it.

The same holds for good business presenters and speakers and managers running meetings. Everyone has heard about the call to action at the end of a speech, presentation, or meeting. But if you wait until the very end of your program to introduce your first call to action, you have probably missed the chance to build trust and habit.

The call to action is not a one time thing in an effective business presentation or meeting. Sure, you want to finish with a call to action, but if that’s the first call to action in your program then it usually feels a little awkward, like introducing a new character at the end of a show.

Try this instead: Build smaller calls to action throughout your program using phrases like these:

“Think about three indicators that we didn’t pay close enough attention to . . .”

“Write down the one example of . . .”



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TRICK 5 *cont.*



“Focus on one way we can . . .”

At the risk of getting all grammatical on you, notice how each of those three sentences begins with an active voice verb, an action word: Think, write, and focus. A call to action has more impact when you use words that describe action. But don't wait until the end of the program to deliver your first call to action. If you do, it will probably feel awkward and forced.

Use a call to action throughout your presentation or speech.

Here are a few examples that you can use just by finishing the clauses or filling in the blanks with information that applies to your presentation.

“I want you to think about . . .”

“Notice the _____ on the screen.”

“Write down the number one thing that . . .”

“Ask the person next to you to . . .”

“List the three biggest things that prevent you from . . .”

If you develop the habit of using the call to action as part of your program and not just the end of your program, then you will build tremendous trust with your audience. After all, if you use a dozen calls to action throughout the program and each call to action gives your audience greater insight and clarity, then when you use the call to action at the end of the program and ask the audience to do something or to something you will have established a far greater credibility and they will feel far more inclined to act in the direction you point them.





So there are your five tips:

1. Know your audience wants you to succeed
2. Look through the lens
3. Go for personable not perfection
4. Set the tone before you say a word
5. Use a call to action from beginning to end

Now it's your turn. Focus on one tip at a time and put it to use in one meeting, presentation, or speech at a time. When you feel like you have mastered the first tip, move on to the second and so on. Avoid the urge to come out of the gate at your next meeting trying to incorporate all five tips at once. You'll overwhelm yourself, not to mention your audience. Becoming a master communicator and learning to shine is a process. Enjoy the journey. The more time and energy you invest in this journey, the more you will improve and the more your audiences will approve.

So get started. Your audience awaits—
and wants you to **SHINE!**





About Gerry Sandusky

Gerry Sandusky is the New York Times best-selling author of [Forgotten Sundays](#), the play-by-play voice for the NFL's Baltimore Ravens, and the president of The Sandusky Group. He has spent more than three decades as an award winning TV and radio broadcaster in Miami and Baltimore. Gerry has spent more than 5,000 hours on live TV and radio.

The Sandusky Group is a communications, media, and presentation skills coaching and consulting firm. Gerry's coaching and consulting work has one focus: Help professionals, executives, and teams shine by becoming master communicators in front of the room and in front of the media.

To learn more about Gerry and The Sandusky Group, visit us online at www.gerrysandusky.com.



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